

# Single workers: Do bosses assume your job is your life?

## Unmarried America an Equal Rights Organization

by Timothy Burn

Your boss just came to your cubicle and plopped down a round trip plane ticket to Gary, Ind., for a critical meet-and-greet with a prospective client.

You're the single guy, or gal, and as far as your boss is concerned, you're the one who's always available for these last-minute missions into the night. It's starting to get old. You would like to have a life.

Meanwhile over in the next cubicle, the working mom of the year is just rolling into the office because of her new flexible schedule she's arranged to help get her kids off to school.

Many single, childless employees are concerned about quality-of-life issues and some are worried that they're working hard while the employees with kids are getting to slack off with all those snazzy work-life programs.

According to a recent study by the Conference Board, single, childless employees feel they are getting a smaller share of the company benefits while still shouldering more of the workload.

One quarter of the 300 work-life professionals surveyed by the Conference Board agreed that childless employees carry more of the workload than their colleagues with kids. About 42 percent said that childless employees believe they are subsidizing health care and other benefits for employees with family members.

A majority of those surveyed also said that childless employees were far more likely to offer to do more work, and less likely to explore work-life programs even though they are available for all employees.

Mary B. Young, work-life consultant with the Human Resources Institute in Boston, denied there is a backlash under way among childless workers who feel left out. Still, she said companies should consider the needs of childless employees as well as working parents.

"Sometimes work-life programs only address needs of employees with children," Mr. Young said. "Often, supervisors and co-workers do not realize that single or childless {employees} have work-life issues."

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